

SUMMARY OF THE GH-IAI ROUNDTABLE ON EU-INDIA SECURITY DIALOGUE

NOVEMBER 7, 2016, MUMBAI

As part of the ‘EU-India Think Tank Twinning Initiative 2016’, Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, Mumbai, partnered with Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, on a series of papers, titled “Moving forward the EU-India Security Dialogue: Traditional and Emerging Issues.”

The topic had four sub-themes:

1. India-EU maritime security and freedom of navigation from the South China Sea and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean;
2. India-EU defence cooperation: the role of industry;
3. Potential and challenges of India-EU space cooperation;
4. India-EU cooperation on cyber security and data protection.

To discuss the findings of this project and the way forward, Gateway House hosted a roundtable discussion on 7 November 2016 in Mumbai.

PARTICIPANTS

- Serving government officials from India and the European Union.
- Representatives of the Indian Navy.
- Representatives from private Indian business.
- Former bureaucrats.
- Representatives from Indian and European think tanks.
- Experts and scholars from Gateway House and IAI, who worked on the project.

OPENING REMARKS

In her opening remarks, Ambassador Neelam Deo, Director, Gateway House stated that the India-EU relationship on technological and defence cooperation had been constrained by the EU which felt bound to follow the American lead on transfer of critical technology. Therefore, it was time for the EU to formulate its own strategic policies to expand the relationship with India.



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General Vincenzo Camporini, Vice-President, IAI stressed that it was in the collective interest of the EU to establish good relations with important global actors like India.

SESSION 1: MARITIME SECURITY AND FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND INDIAN OCEAN TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

In this session, participants from India and the EU emphasised that tackling traditional challenges of maritime security and maintaining freedom of navigation in the region had assumed greater salience for both India and the EU. But both sides differed on what constituted regional maritime security. India views the EU as not being a significant regional player, save for limited counter-piracy operations. Nor has the EU highlighted India's concerns on terrorism in its neighbourhood, or done enough to contain the very real possibility of an interstate conflict which can threaten regional stability.

As a way forward, India and EU can jointly deepen maritime cooperation, thus:

- Develop the India-EU High Level Dialogue on maritime cooperation, mirroring the EU-ASEAN High Level Dialogue;
- Make a declaration of intent on maritime security, similar to the U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region;
- Increase coordination between EU NAVFOR and the Indian Navy and operationalise regular India-EU naval exercises;
- Promote cooperation under the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association;
- Collaborate on capacity-building in the Indian Ocean region and concentrate on issues like disaster management, early warning systems, maritime tourism and the Blue Economy.

SESSION 2: INDIA-EU DEFENCE COOPERATION: THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY

India has closer defence ties with individual European countries like France, UK and Germany, even central and eastern Europe, than it has with the EU as a whole. India is in the midst of a massive military modernisation programme, presenting multiple opportunities for European defence companies for selling and making in India land, air, naval, and electronic systems. India is also upgrading the capabilities of its paramilitaries and police forces. By enhancing political engagement, India and the EU can strengthen mutual defence cooperation. A major hurdle: the EU's restrictive dual-use regime and commercial rivalries between European defence companies.

To strengthen their defence cooperation, India and the EU must do the following:

- The EU must treat India as a strategic partner in the true sense of the term;
- Establish specialised dialogue mechanisms, such as Defence Dialogue, Strategic Intelligence Dialogue, Homeland Security Dialogue, Defence Technology Dialogue – to iron out differences and understand Indian sensitivities;
- European companies must demonstrate their long-term commitment to India by establishing defence R&D centres and Centres of Excellence in India;
- Create a new platform, under EU auspices, where Indian and European defence companies can discuss possible collaborations and understand India's technological priorities as enumerated by the Ministry of Defence and Defence Research and Development Organisation;

- Engage in counter-terrorism cooperation through joint Special Forces exercises.

SESSION 3: POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF INDIA-EU SPACE COOPERATION

India-EU space cooperation predates the formation of the EU. The only EU initiative involving India is the Galileo programme. Beyond Galileo, there is no space cooperation. This is a pity, and both sides must explore opportunities in other areas like spectrum management. Both sides must work to reduce political disagreements also to tackle threats in space.

There are various opportunities for India and the EU to enhance space cooperation:

- Engage in 'scientific diplomacy' to build trust, find common areas of interest and involve Indian and European space experts and private space companies;
- Exchange knowledge and data on crisis management in space and cooperate on creating Space Situational Awareness;
- Consider creating a global network of space surveillance and earth observation satellites;
- Cooperate on joint ground stations such as Europe's ground station projects in Chile and new ground stations in India.

SESSION 4: INDIA-EU COOPERATION ON CYBER SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Many of India's cyber security concerns resonate with Europe: critical infrastructure protection, cyber crimes, the deep web and use of social media for extremist propaganda. Yet notable differences emerged between the Indian and European participants in this session. A European participant remarked that while India's approach to cyber security issues was state-centric, the EU's position was nuanced and not restricted to security issues. The issue of data protection which has blocked India-EU Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement negotiations was also discussed extensively. Indian participants pointed out that the EU's strict, bureaucratic data protection regime had disadvantaged not only Indian companies, but also EU businesses.

To develop India-EU cyber security cooperation, the following measures were suggested:

- Foster practical cooperation between the respective law enforcement agencies and with Europol for evidence-collecting methodologies;
- Establish a separate dialogue so India can benefit from Europe's expertise in its 'Smart Cities' programme and the related cyber threats;
- Leverage the expertise and experience of India's private sector IT companies with Public Private Partnerships with the EU for raising encryption standards and promote cyber security research;
- Bridge differences between India and EU on India's data adequacy issue by acknowledging Indian sensitivities on privacy matters;
- European countries must be forthcoming in sharing experiences with India, on lessons learnt from past cyber incidents as part of capacity building measures;

- The EU can help India set up simulation laboratories and testing facilities for controlled experiments.

PHOTOS



This event was held in the context of the 'EU-India Think Tank Twinning Initiative 2016', sponsored by the EU Delegation of the European Union to India and implemented by a consortium led by DAI, in cooperation with the European Policy Centre (EPC) and the EU-Asia Centre (EUAC)